

Members

Sen. Brent Waltz, Chairperson
Sen. Allen Paul
Sen. James Tomes
Sen. James Arnold
Sen. Timothy Skinner
Sen. Greg Taylor
Rep. Robert Morris, Vice-Chairperson
Rep. Matthew Lehman
Rep. Woody Burton
Rep. Charles Moseley
Rep. Gail Riecken
Rep. Justin Moed



INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON DRIVER EDUCATION

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Authority: P.L. 101-2009

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 17, 2013
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington
St., Room 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Sen. Brent Waltz, Chairperson; Sen. James Tomes; Sen. James Arnold; Sen. Greg Taylor; Rep. Robert Morris, Vice-Chairperson; Rep. Charles Moseley; Rep. Justin Moed.

Members Absent: Sen. Allen Paul; Sen. Timothy Skinner; Rep. Matthew Lehman; Rep. Woody Burton; Rep. Gail Riecken.

Chairperson Waltz called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. He stated that there will be no proposed legislation to come out of the Committee. There already are statutes in place allowing for the setting of standards for driver education providers and he is not receptive to adding a fee or tax to subsidize the businesses of the providers.

Tom Zachary, Drive Zone, LLC

Mr. Zachary's interest is in improving and clarifying the standards for driver education schools. He believes that there have been unintended consequences from the Graduated Drivers' License (GDL) legislation in the proceeding years. He, along with other members

¹ These minutes, exhibits, and other materials referenced in the minutes can be viewed electronically at <http://www.in.gov/legislative> Hard copies can be obtained in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for hard copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for hard copies.

of the Indiana Driver Education Association (INDEA), had suggested proposals to enhance the GDL language, including restrictions on driving at night, increasing the education requirements, and limiting the number of passengers that a new driver may transport.

The GDL changes in 2009, which did improve safety, came about partly because of urging from the GDL Coalition, composed of, among others, representatives of driver education schools, Students Against Drunk Driving, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, State Farm Insurance, and the American Automobile Association. The legislation raised the age at which a child could first get a probationary license whether or not the child had taken driver education; if driver education has been successfully completed, a probationary license may be granted at age 16 and 6 months. Because of only a three month advantage in securing the probationary license, this law tends to encourage families to skip formal driver education classes.

There are 24 states that allow a child to secure a license at 16 after having taken driver education and at age 18 with no formal driver education training; only Indiana and South Dakota have a 90 day difference in the age of first possible licensing. Indiana led the country in the number of deaths of 16 and 17 year old drivers in the first 6 months of 2012 when compared to 2011. Indiana has the highest rate of fatal crashes involving young drivers per 100,000 population among Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Indiana.

Mr. Zachary quoted statistics from the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), showing that more than 66% of all Indiana teens will receive a probationary license without having had driver education. He urged raising the age to 17 for a probationary license for those without driver education. He also would like to see the education hourly requirement as 30 hours of classroom instruction, passing with a minimum grade of "B". Representative Morris questioned if 30 hours is minimum, would 60 or 90 hours be better; Mr. Zachary stated that across the nation the standard is 30 hours classroom and 6 hours of behind the wheel training. Senator Taylor commented that there is no way to know the cause of the accidents of the 16 and 17 year olds; perhaps another driver actually caused the accident. In response to Senator Taylor, Mr. Zachary stated that his courses cost between \$379 to \$409, which includes the 30/6 hours of instruction.

Concerning driver education instructors, Mr. Zachary stated that they must have 9 hours of college credit in driver education and most have Master's degrees, as many have taught in public schools.

During Committee discussion, Senator Tones commented that as a professional driver with 33 years of experience, he has seen a deterioration of driving habits on the roads.

Kyle Meek, Indiana All-Star Driving School, Inc.

Mr. Meek owns seven driver education schools and oversees programs for 30 high schools, the charges for which run from about \$350 to \$400. He is a member of the BMV's Driver Education Advisory Board. He believes that high schools have intentionally gotten out of providing driver education instruction. Individuals who are certified to teach driver education are retiring and the certification is no longer a part of the physical education instruction credentialing. Nine credit hours of course credit and at least 60 hours of college credit are required by the state in order to become a driver education instructor.

He stated that the most detrimental change to his industry in the last two years was the introduction of on-line driver education instruction, as he sees a significantly lower skill level in driving when the student has taken an on-line course. On-line schools can be

located outside of Indiana. He would like to see at least two hours of in-class training mandated for the learner's permit, and would like to see driver education schools be able to teach defensive driving classes. He also urged changes to the law so that driver education schools would be able to give drive tests to students. Senator Waltz observed that the BMV sets up the regulations for the driver education schools so it could change the regulations for the schools if it chose to do so; there appear to be no legislative changes needed other than to change "may" to "shall" regarding the driving test examination.

Veterans' "Fast Track" to Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

Representative Moseley asked for a status update on the question that he had asked BMV at the prior meeting, that of how many veterans have been able to utilize the BMV's "fast track" to a CDL based on driving experience gained while in the military. Steve Lock, of the BMV, responded that he would secure this information and would have it distributed to the members of the Committee.

Discussion ensued concerning legislatively setting a later age for the first issuance of a probationary operator's license and about driving etiquette.

There being no further business before the Committee, Chairperson Waltz adjourned the Committee at 2:20 p.m.